

Friday, September 3, 2004

Agency receives federal grants for bioterrorism preparedness

The Indiana State Department of Health's bioterrorism preparedness efforts are once again being supported by two large federal grants.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has awarded the agency more than \$16.2 million. This is the fifth year that the agency has received a CDC grant for bioterrorism preparedness.

In fact, Indiana was among a limited number of states that had already received grant funds before the attacks of September 11, 2001 and the anthrax attacks that followed.

As in the past, these funds will be used to hire additional personnel, improve and add infrastructure, and create training and exercise opportunities for officials at both the state and local levels.

For example, several new field positions have been created during the past two years, including public health administrators, epidemiologists, and public information officers.

Also, ISDH has used grant funds to purchase and install new computers at nearly every local health department throughout the state. Plans for this year call for similar efforts.

Focus Areas

- A:** Preparedness Planning and Readiness Assessment
- B:** Surveillance and Epidemiology Capacity
- C:** Laboratory Capacity - Biologic Agents
- D:** Laboratory Capacity - Chemical Agents
- E:** Health Alert Network/ Communications and Information Dissemination
- F:** Risk Communication and Health Information Dissemination
- G:** Education and Training
- HRSA (Health Resources and Services Administration):** Hospital Preparedness

"We want to identify any gaps that are still out there and fill those gaps," said Michael Hurst, who is Public Health Preparedness and Emergency Response director.

"We also plan to continue to do exercises and to perfect as much as possible our ability to respond to, and recover from, all hazards," he said.

This money not only helps the state become more prepared for a possible act of bioterrorism.

It also helps improve response to other public health threats, such as the monke-

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— Michael Hurst
Public Health Preparedness
and Emergency Response Director

pox outbreak of 2003 and the Hepatitis A case in Grant County earlier this year.

The grant is split into seven "Focus

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September designated Prostate Cancer Awareness month

Prostate Cancer is the most commonly diagnosed cancer in Indiana men, and it is the second leading cause of cancer deaths for men in general, according to the Indiana Cancer Facts and Figures 2003.

Over a lifetime, men have a one-in-six chance of being diagnosed with prostate cancer, and African-American men are twice as likely to die from the disease.



And it's for these reasons that the Indiana State Department of Health is recognizing National Prostate Cancer Awareness Month in September.

The cancer, described as an abnormal growth of cells in the prostate gland, can grow very slowly not affecting health, but

can also spread quickly, according to William Thornton, Prostate Cancer Program Coordinator.

"We want to increase awareness of prostate cancer, as well as the importance of making informed decisions about being screened for the cancer," said Thornton.

Age, race, and family history are the principle risk factors in prostate cancer. According to the American Cancer Society's Cancer Facts and Figures 2004, there is a five-year survival rate of nearly 100 percent when prostate cancer is found early.

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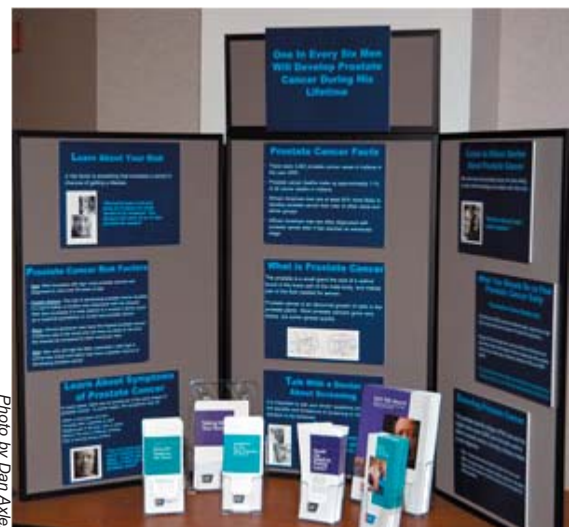


Photo by Dan Axler

Employees can view this Prostate Cancer display in the 2 N. Meridian St. lobby.

Employee Incentive Committee seeking fresh ideas, faces

Calling all fun, creative and outgoing types! The State Department of Health Employee Incentive Committee is looking for you.

Created in 2001, the committee organizes and hosts programs to boost employee morale, and to add some "fun" around the office, said Marc LoCascio, ITS, committee co-chairman.

Committee members, currently some 20-strong, meet monthly, with a few exceptions, and work at the committee-sponsored events.

"We are always looking for new ideas for employee activities," said LoCascio. "We are looking for new members who will come to the table with energy and desire to improve morale at the agency."

While activities such as used book sales are the committee's source of funding, others offer community-service like sending greeting cards to the residents of the Indiana Veterans' Home.

Currently, the committee is gearing up for the ever-popular "Year-End Bash," which offers staff a chance to gear up for the holidays while eating and mingling with each other.

"This committee enjoys putting on the year-end party as much as people enjoy attending it," LoCascio said.

Those interested in joining the com-

mittee are invited to the next meeting on Tuesday, Sept. 21 at 1 p.m. in Conference Room 8A.

Because of various time commitments involved throughout the year, employees must receive supervisor's permission to participate.

For more information, contact Marc LoCascio at mlocascio@isdh.state.in.us.



Photo by Dan Axler

State Department of Health employees shop at the Employee Incentive Committee's book sale Aug. 26. Money raised at the sale will help fund the Year-End Bash.

"We are looking for new members who will come to the table with energy and desire to improve morale at the agency."

-Marc LoCascio, committee co-chairman

Agency seeking input on children's services

The Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems Program at the Indiana State Department of Health is seeking public comment on the services for young children and their families available in Indiana's local communities.

In order to build a comprehensive, community-based system of services for Hoosier children from birth up to age six, the Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems Program is seeking local community members to report on what is working well and to identify their unmet needs in the areas of access to health insurance and a medical home, mental health and socio-emotional development, early care

and education, parent education, and family support.




and others."

Input from the community forum meetings will be combined with comments from a core partners group and various subcommittees to formulate a strategic plan to support a coordinated system of services for young children from birth to

age six in Indiana, said Wilkes.

For more information, contact Wilkes at awilkes@isdh.state.in.us.

(A list of forums is on page 3.)

The Express  Indiana State Department of Health

The Indiana State Department of Health *Express* is a biweekly publication for ISDH employees and stakeholders. Words in blue are links that you can access directly if you read the *Express* online. To submit news items, call (317) 234-2817 or send information to: ISDH *Express*, Office of Public Affairs, 2 N. Meridian St., Section 6G, Indianapolis, IN 46204-3003. Inquiries should be directed to:

Julie Fletcher, Editor
 Telephone (317) 234-2817
 Fax (317) 233-7873
jfletche@isdh.state.in.us
<http://www.statehealth.IN.gov>
 Margaret Joseph, Director of Public Affairs

Gregory A. Wilson, M.D.
 State Health Commissioner

Planning group working towards setting agency priorities

The Indiana State Department of Health planning work group has made significant process over the last two months to update the agency's strategic initiatives.

The work group's communication subcommittee completed a survey to assess communication effectiveness at the State Department of Health. The survey indicates a continuing need to strengthen and broaden our communications efforts with our staff.

The work group has also completed a survey of staff and external partners assessing how well the agency is prepared to provide the 10 Essential Public Health Services. More than 79 external partners representing local health departments, other state agencies, private organizations, universities, and health professionals responded to the survey.

More than 120 State Department of



Health staff also responded to the survey.

The work group is reviewing the results of the survey as part of finishing an assessment of health and other issues outside the agency that provide challenges and opportunities to public health.

The work group is also using the information to review agency capabilities to respond to those challenges and opportunities.

The mission, vision, and values subcommittee has prepared a list of proposed

value statements and suggested changes in the State Department of Health mission and vision statements for the work group's review.

Next, the work group will use all of this information to identify priority initiatives for the State Department of Health for the next few years.

The work group will form teams to develop strategies to address these initiatives in the next edition of the State Health Performance Plan this fall.

The group plans to present the recommended values, mission and vision statements, findings, and priority initiatives at meetings for agency staff in the next few weeks. State Department of Health staff will be invited to comment on these before the work group makes its final recommendations to State Health Commissioner Greg Wilson, M.D., for approval.

—Joe Hunt

Police offer tips on avoiding identity theft

We've all heard horror stories about fraud that's committed on us in stealing a name, address, Social Security number, credit cards, etc. Within a week, the thief or thieves order an expensive monthly cell phone package, apply for a major credit card, have a credit line approved by a computer company, receive a PIN number, change your BMV records, and MORE!



Here is some critical information to limit the damage in case this happens to you or someone that you know:

◆ We have been told that we should cancel our credit cards immediately. But the key is having the toll free numbers and the card numbers

handy so you know who to call. Keep those where you can find them easily.

◆ File a police report immediately in the jurisdiction where it was stolen. This proves to credit providers you were diligent, and is a first step toward an investigation.

◆ Review your credit report annually.

◆ Shred confidential documents.

◆ Review all account statements promptly.

◆ Use secure mailboxes to send and receive mail.

◆ Use caution when asked for personal information over the phone or the internet.

◆ Beware of current scam tactics such as "phishing" or "spoofing."

But here is what is perhaps the most important: Call the three national credit reporting organizations and Social Security fraud hotline immediately to place a fraud alert on your name and Social Security Number. The alert means any company that checks your credit knows your information was stolen and they have to contact you by phone to authorize new credit.

◆ EQUIFAX 1-800-525-6285

◆ EXPERIAN (formerly TRW) 1-888-397-3742

◆ TRANS UNION 1-800-680-7289

◆ SOCIAL SECURITY (fraud) 1-800-269-0271

For additional information, visit www.consumer.gov/idtheft.

Upcoming Public Forums

(continued from page 2)

◆ Indianapolis

Wed., Sept. 8
5 to 7 p.m.
Glendale Mall Community Room
6200 N. Keystone Ave.

◆ Indianapolis

Wed., Sept. 9
1 to 3 p.m.
United Way of Central Indiana
3901 N. Meridian St.

(Forums were also held this week in Evansville, Ft. Wayne, Gary, Jeffersonville and South Bend.)

Public comments can also be made online at the Indiana State Department of Health Web site:
<http://www.statehealth.IN.gov>



Cancer (continued from page 1)

An increase in treatment options are also seen.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), in most cases, there are no symptoms of the early stages of prostate cancer, but in some cases, the symptoms may include weak or interrupted urine flow; urinating often, especially at night; nagging pain in the back, hips or pelvis; and blood in the urine or difficulty urinating.

"Discussing the pros and cons of being

screened with your doctor is the best place to start, because prostate cancer may show no symptoms," said Thornton.

In its efforts to increase awareness of prostate cancer issues, the State Department of Health is providing Community Health Centers and the Indiana Minority Health Coalition with free educational materials to pass along to clients. Physicians throughout Indiana are also receiving research-based prostate cancer



information.

"We are building upon our relationships with these organizations and physicians, and serving as a resource to assist in educating their patients," said Thornton.

During Prostate Cancer Awareness month in September, agency employees can find more information on prostate cancer at a tabletop display with educational materials in the 2 N. Meridian Street lobby.

For more information, contact Thornton at wthornt@isdh.state.in.us.

Have a great story idea for *The Express*?
Send it to jfletche@isdh.state.in.us

Shirt orders taken through October 1

Order your Indiana State Department of Health shirts today!

Long sleeve and short sleeve button down shirts, as well as long sleeve and short sleeve polos are available in a variety of colors and sizes, with profits from the sales benefiting the Employee Incentive Committee. Prices range from \$16 to \$30.

Order forms are available on the Intranet, and should be returned to Eric Neuburger, Governor's Council on Physical Fitness; Elaine Scaife, Operational Services; Jennifer Pitcher, Human Resources; or Teresa Watson, Health Care Regulatory Services by the October 1 deadline. Payment is by cash only. For more information, contact Neuburger, Scaife, Pitcher, or Watson through GroupWise.



Photo by Dan Axler

Grant (continued from page 1)

Areas," with each Focus Area overseeing a different segment of the grant. Although the funds are divided, representatives of all Focus Areas work closely together to plan and execute various initiatives.

ISDH also received another grant from the Health Resources and Services Admin-

istration (HRSA).

This year's HRSA grant, which is overseen by John Braeckel, totals nearly \$10.3 million dollars. At least 80 percent of that money must be distributed to Indiana hospitals and Braeckel says ISDH has always easily met and exceeded that requirement.

— *Andy Zirkle*

HIPAA Corner

Let's take a snapshot of what's been going on around the country as it relates to privacy. Privacy is serious business and is a component of HIPAA. Recent federal laws have forced large and small health-related organizations to pay more attention to how private information is being used and disclosed.

In Seattle, Washington, on August 19, 2004, Richard W. Gibson, 42, of SeaTac, Washington, pleaded guilty in federal court to wrongful disclosure of individually identifiable health information for economic gain. This is the first criminal conviction in the United States under the health information privacy provisions of the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA).

Gibson admitted that he obtained a cancer patient's name, date of birth, and social security number while he was employed at the Seattle Cancer Care Alliance, and that he disclosed that information to get four credit cards in the patient's name. He also admitted that he used several of those cards to rack up more than \$9,000 in debt in the patient's name. Gibson admitted he used the cards to purchase various items, including video games, home improvement supplies, apparel, jewelry, porcelain figurines, groceries, and gasoline for his personal use. He was fired shortly after the identity theft was discovered.

The case was investigated by the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) and is being prosecuted by Asst. U.S. Attorney Susan Loitz.

— *Contributed by Lisa Mani, ISDH Privacy Coordinator*